

# The Fiber-to-the-Home Project

## What did Flint Energies announce?

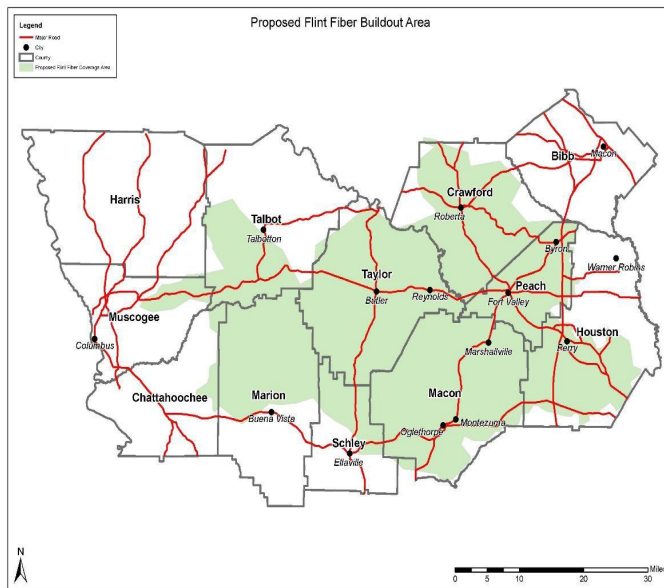
Flint Energies has announced its partnership with rural broadband leader, Conexon, to support the construction of a fiber communications network across a large portion of Flint Energies' service territory. As part of this partnership, Conexon's internet service provider (ISP) subsidiary, **Conexon Connect**, will utilize the excess fiber on this communications network to offer world-class fiber broadband (high-speed internet) service to unserved and underserved communities within the portions of Flint's service territory that the new fiber network touches.

## What are Flint's broadband plans?

Flint will not be a broadband provider, but will construct the fiber network to be utilized for its smart grid communication needs. Smart grid capabilities deliver benefits such as improved power outage response times, better load balancing, and more efficient electricity delivery. To support rural high-speed internet rollouts across its unserved territory, Flint will lease extra fiber strands on this network to Conexon Connect, the company serving as the internet service provider (ISP) and delivering fiber-to-the-home (FTTH) service. Under this arrangement, the design and construction of the FTTH network will be led by Conexon, with the network managed and operated by Conexon Connect.

## Where will the broadband be available initially?

The initial construction area will focus on unserved and underserved Flint Members and will make service available to approximately 31,000 homes, businesses, and institutions across nine counties, including Crawford, south Houston, Macon, Marion, Muscogee, Peach, Schley, Talbot, and Taylor counties. Below is a map showing the general area of the initial fiber build area.



## When will construction on the network start? How long will it take to complete?

Flint will build its fiber network over four years, beginning in 2022. Service from Connect, powered by Flint Energies, will become available on a "rolling" basis as construction progresses. We will keep members updated as high-speed internet service becomes available in their areas.

## Why is Flint getting involved in broadband?

Flint is strengthening its electric system by installing a fiber backbone which gives us smart grid benefits including improved power outage response times, better load balancing, and more efficient electricity delivery. We are also taking this opportunity to help meet the critical need of high-speed internet for rural Georgia residents. The time for us to act is now. Federal and State grant funds are available for this purpose. That money will get spent somewhere and there is no reason it should not be middle Georgia.

### **How will the broadband project work?**

This fiber communications network is being constructed by Flint Energies to support current and future smart grid needs. Excess capacity of this fiber network will be available to Conexon Connect, the internet service provider (ISP). Conexon Connect will maintain the infrastructure and support customers on the network. Internet customers will receive communications and billing from Conexon Connect. When members work with customer service, they will be speaking with Conexon Connect representatives.

### **Why are you not building in my territory?**

Flint Energies is focused on bringing needed high-speed internet to unserved and underserved communities in rural Georgia. In larger cities, there is a variety of existing internet service providers that can readily meet their high-speed internet needs. Rural Georgians do not have the kind of connectivity opportunities urban areas are accustomed to. Should Flint's operational needs change in the years to come, fiber expansion into additional areas will be given consideration.

### **Will my electric bill increase to pay for the fiber-to-the-home (FTTH) network?**

No. This will not increase your electric costs.

### **Will I pay my internet bill along with my electric bill?**

No. The partnership between Flint Energies and Conexon Connect simply means Conexon Connect is serving as your internet service provider (ISP). You will continue to receive your electric bill as normal, while your fiber broadband bill (internet and/or phone) will be sent from Conexon Connect.

### **What is the process of building a fiber-to-the-home (FTTH) network?**

Building a fiber-to-the-home (FTTH) network is generally a multi-year intensive project encompassing numerous steps and efforts. For each project, the network will be built in zones or phases, with the number of phases dependent on the size of the target service area. Each phase typically takes about 12 months from construction start to customer installation. Conexon Connect will keep members updated as the project progresses.

### **How will I know which phase or zone I'm in?**

The Connect, powered by Flint Energies, "phase map" can be found at [ConexonConnect.com](http://ConexonConnect.com). Simply select "Flint Energies" from the EMC drop-down menu and then "check availability." When you enter your address, you will have the opportunity to view a build phase map and sign up for updates from Connect as the project progresses. Different build phases are marked by specific colors. *In some cases, the search tool may not find an address.* This could be due to limitations of Google Earth in certain areas or if an address is not in the area to be built. Even if your address is not found, we encourage you to sign up for updates. Your contact information allows Conexon Connect to reach out to you if needed.

## **The Technology – Internet Service**

### **What is a fiber-optic network?**

Fiber-optic systems are made up of tiny strands of glass that carry data using light waves, resulting in much faster internet speeds and better reliability than traditional copper lines. Most internet providers use fiber in their systems but use copper lines for the final connections to the home, resulting in slower speeds. Flint Energies, Conexon, and fellow cooperatives believe 100% FTTH is the best, most sustainable communications choice. With our FTTH service, we offer "symmetrical" speeds, meaning you'll enjoy the same high speeds whether uploading or downloading. A fiber-optic network can carry an extremely high amount of data and is more reliable than other networks, because it's less susceptible to interference and damage from lightning and other acts of nature.

### **Why is the Connect, powered by Flint Energies, network different from other internet services?**

Conexon Connect builds only 100% fiber-to-the-home (FTTH) networks. Others may tout fiber, but in many cases that fiber stops at the street, meaning another transmission medium is needed to bring

internet into your home. Many internet providers use fiber in their systems but use copper lines for the final connections to the home, resulting in slower speeds. Fiber to the home brings a new level of reliability and speed.

**What internet and telephone packages will be available for my home?** Conexon Connect offers three tiers of internet pricing, along with service enhancements and HD-quality phone service.

<b>RESIDENTIAL PRICING</b>	
<b>Connect Ultimate</b> 2 Gigabit (2,000 Mbps) Internet*	<b>\$99.95/month</b> <i>Includes Managed Wi-Fi with Conexon Connect router and Safe &amp; Secure package</i>
<b>Connect Premier</b> 1 Gigabit (1,000 Mbps) Internet	<b>\$79.95/month</b> <i>(We encourage customer to take Managed Wi-Fi, which includes wireless router. Otherwise, customers must supply wireless router<sup>^</sup>)</i>
<b>Connect Basic</b> 100 Mbps Internet	<b>\$49.95/month</b> <i>(customer must supply wireless router<sup>^</sup>)</i>
<b>HD-Quality Phone Service</b> Unlimited local and long-distance calls	<b>\$29.95/month</b> with Internet package <b>\$39.95/month</b> stand-alone service plus local taxes and fees
<b>INTERNET ADD-ONS</b>	
<b>Managed Wi-Fi Service</b>	<b>\$4.95/month</b> <i>Includes Conexon Connect router</i>
<b>Safe &amp; Secure Package</b>	<b>\$3/month</b> <i>Only available with Managed Wi-Fi</i>
<b>Wi-Fi Extender</b>	<b>\$3/month</b> per extender per month

\*Connect Ultimate offers download speeds of up to 2 gigabits per second; upload speeds are typically between 1 and 2 gigabits per second. 2 gigabit speeds can be obtained by directly connecting via ethernet cable to the ONT. The device conducting the speed test must be capable of sending and receiving data at a minimum of 2 gigabits of throughput.

<sup>^</sup>Conexon Connect cannot support or troubleshoot customer-supplied wireless routers.

### What is Managed Wi-Fi?

Managed Wi-Fi Service, included with Connect Ultimate and available for \$4.95/month with other packages, enhances your overall user experience. It helps deliver the fastest, highest quality Wi-Fi with advanced remote support capabilities that allow our tech support team to automatically identify and troubleshoot issues and make changes remotely – in many cases, before you even experience an interruption. This means quicker resolution of potential issues and convenience for you.

### What is Connect's Safe and Secure?

The Connect Safe & Secure Package, available only with managed Wi-Fi, includes:

1. Parental Controls consisting of an extensive set of controls that allow parents to easily create and enforce online rules for the users and devices on their home networks. It provides them peace of mind by protecting their children from inappropriate or harmful content.
2. Network Security that provides malicious website protection, anti-virus and anti-ransomware packet inspection, and intrusion detection. The service proactively monitors network traffic coming into the home, automatically blocking anything that looks suspicious.

## What internet packages are available for my business?

<b>BUSINESS PRICING</b>	
<b>2 Gigabit Internet (2,000 Mbps)</b> Optimal performance for businesses with 25+ connected devices, work in the cloud or with large files	<b>\$349.95/month</b>
<b>600 Mbps Internet</b> Optimal performance for businesses with under 25 connected devices, work with large files or wish to provide customers with Wi-Fi	<b>\$149.95/month</b>
<b>100 Mbps Internet</b> Optimal performance for businesses with up to 10 connected devices	<b>\$79.95/month</b>
<b>Dedicated Fiber Services</b> Scaled to fit your business	<b>Customized for business needs</b>
<b>HD-Quality Business Voice Service</b> Unlimited local and long-distance calls	<b>Customized for business needs</b>

### Are there data caps with this service?

No. With fiber internet from Connect, powered by Flint Energies, you will have no data caps or throttling.

### How can I sign up?

You can sign up for updates today by visiting [ConexonConnect.com](http://ConexonConnect.com) From there, select Flint Energies from the EMC dropdown menu. If available, you can check the build timeline and enter your information so that we can contact you in the future with all the latest information. We will reach out with sign-up access and to schedule installations once we reach areas ready for customer connection.

## The Next Steps – Getting Service

### What is the installation process?

Once you sign up for service, fiber installation is simple. Conexon Connect will pull fiber from Flint Energies' main lines and follow power lines to attach the fiber to your home or business. The fiber will run to your home or business in the same manner power lines run to your home or business. If your electric service comes from overhead lines, so will your broadband service. If your electric service comes from underground lines, so will your broadband service. Next, Conexon Connect will attach the fiber line to a box near your electric meter where the inside wiring connects with the outside wiring. Finally, the fiber is connected to a fiber jack inside your home or office, where it's plugged into the modem we provide.

Construction crews pulling and hanging the fiber and taking it to your home's outside wiring are preparing the network to go live once construction in the area is complete. A Conexon Connect employee will contact you to schedule an appointment for an in-home installer to finalize your connection and test the services from your equipment. Once that install is complete and tested, your service should be ready to go.

## **What equipment will I need to purchase?**

Conexon Connect recommends you take its managed Wi-Fi service that provides your home with the best experience. With the service Conexon Connect provides, a carrier grade Wi-Fi router that can watch for potential issues and will auto heal the network to make your devices run as smooth as possible is the best option. This service also delivers advanced troubleshooting abilities if you do need to call Conexon Connect with an issue. Alternately, you can bring your own Wi-Fi router and connect it to the installed modem.

Your existing computers and Wi-Fi devices should connect to the Conexon Connect provided devices without the need for additional hardware purchases.

Conexon Connect provides two pieces of equipment that are required to connect your home to the Internet. One piece is an Optical Network Terminal (ONT) that converts the fiber optic signal coming into your home to a wired ethernet connection. That wired ethernet connection then connects to a combination router/firewall and wireless access point, also called a Home Gateway, which is the second device.

The Home Gateway supports the following wireless protocols:

- 2.4 GHz and 5 GHz, simultaneous dual-band
- 5 GHz 802.11ax (Wi-Fi 6) certified, 802.11a/n/ac compatible
- 6x6 streams (2x2 @ 2.4 GHz and 4x4 @ 5 GHz)
- 2.4 GHz 802.11ax (Wi-Fi 6) certified, 802.11b/g/ac compatible

The Home Gateway has four wired 1 Gbps ethernet ports to support wired devices. Given the broad range of connectivity options provided by Conexon Connect, your current device should connect seamlessly to the provided equipment.

If your computer does not have a network interface card (NIC) or support Wi-Fi, then additional equipment purchases may be required. If this is the case, you may want to consider a computer upgrade to get the best experience from the Conexon Connect network.

## **What changes are you going to be making to my property? Why do you have to trim trees?**

As we get started building our world-class fiber-to-the-home network, in some cases, residents and members may see some changes in their neighborhoods. The installation of fiber requires more space, to prevent incidental contact with the fiber-optic cabling. As a result, some trees and vegetation near the lines may need to be trimmed, sometimes substantially, or in other cases removed altogether. Trimming trees or removing them is a necessary process to prevent damage to the fiber lines that can cause outages, threaten public safety, and risk property damage. It also ensures an efficient, cost-effective build that brings you fiber service sooner. We are committed to treating any impacted members and their property with quality service and respect. When right-of-way changes impact your home or property, we will work with you, the homeowner, as much as the project allows.

## **The Benefits**

### **Why are you offering broadband service?**

Flint Energies has a need for an improved communication network across a large portion of its territory. Just as is the case for your home, fiber is the most effective medium for Flint to use for its own internal communications network. By connecting Flint Energies' electric substations and offices with fiber, we will create a smart grid with more automation capabilities to better serve our Members. Smart grid capabilities, the standard for optimum electric infrastructure, allows our devices to communicate with each other and delivers benefits such as improved power outage response times, better load balancing, more efficient electricity delivery and others.

In addition, our communities have long suffered from a lack of access to the same speeds and capabilities as those in less rural areas. By allowing Conexon Connect to lease excess fiber from Flint

Energies' fiber network, broadband availability will increase across our service area. This will help close the digital divide between those who have access to advanced technology and those who don't. A few of the many advantages of broadband access are:

- Online teaching capabilities allowing our students to learn from home
- Healthcare benefits such as telemedicine
- Work-from-home interoffice connectivity and videoconferencing capabilities that will help professionals stay in their homes while being optimally productive
- Quality of life improvements through enhanced communications
- Economic development and growth in rural areas. Access to high-speed internet can raise home prices and attract businesses to communities.

## Phone Service

### **Is Conexon Connect, offering phone service?**

Yes, the Connect, powered by Flint Energies, service will offer unlimited local and long-distance HD-quality phone service for \$29.95/month plus any applicable local taxes and fees for those who package the phone service with internet. Conexon Connect's standalone phone service (without internet) is \$39.95/month plus applicable taxes and fees.

### **Can I keep my phone number?**

In most cases, customers changing providers will be able to keep their phone numbers.

### **Do I have to sign up for phone services to get high-speed internet service?**

No. You can sign up for either internet or phone or both together in a single package.